JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Volume 23 Number 3

2012

At the ANA "World's Fair of Money"

ANA Club Table with Carl Feldman and Craig Eberhart

See pages 6-8

Photo courtesy of John Frost

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BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded in 1989 by Steve Epstein
ANA Club Member C-146266

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I write this message near the end of August with signs of Summer's end based on cooler weather, school starting and plants no longer flourishing.

The "World's Fair of Money," usually called the ANA Convention, was held at the Philadelphia Convention Center from August 7 thru 11. Each ANA I've attended has been a positive experience. I measure this by learning new information, obtaining desirable numismatic material, meeting old and new friends and more. The convention hall was vast providing wide aisles, plenty of exhibit space and a nice layout. The bourse had a multitude of dealers offering most everything numismatic and some items outside this category. The auction was held by Stack's Bowers with nine live bidding sessions coupled with on-line and telephone bidding. The 'power' coin sold Thursday evening was the 1873-CC no arrows Seated Dime in gem BU (ex Eliasberg) which reached a hammer price of $1.6 million ($1.84 with the buyer's fee). On Friday morning, my daughter called me to say this coin news was broadcast on the TV news.

I personally was excited with the sale of the David Davis set of Capped Bust Dimes (1809 to 1837). David died early this year after a long illness. His coins represented his zeal as a collector. Here were 197 lots representing the Davis collection, complete as to dates, die marriages, die states and nice duplicates. The grades ranged from VG to uncirculated with the majority in VF to EF condition.

The Barber coinage may have been underrepresented in this auction. I looked carefully at two important coins:

1905-O micro O PCGS-63 CAC an attractive lustrous coin, price realized $4993.75, and

1892-O micro O PCGS-Good-4 a worn coin, more on the reverse, price realized $4846.88.

The BCCS meeting was held on Saturday at 9:00AM with ten individuals in attendance. Approximately a third were not members. John Frost had interesting A/V presentations and discussed the highly successful regional meetings. If you are interested in this local BCCS presence, contact John.

One important discussion point was the scheduling of the BCCS meeting at the summer ANA convention. From the birth of our Barber group, we have met on Saturday morning (possibly because this time slot was not as crowded as earlier convention days). There is a consensus that our meeting day should be moved to

an earlier day of the convention. The rationale supporting this is based on these points: ANA summer conventions run from Tuesday to Saturday with individuals potentially arriving some time on the first day and departing on or before the last day, several BCCS members indicated they would not be staying into Saturday and finally, the bourse area showed less traffic on Saturday. It appears Wednesday thru Friday represent viable days for our meeting while on balance, these days are packed with other club meetings and convention functions. I will review this year's schedule and discuss options with ANA convention personnel. We will survey our members in the 4th quarter issue of the *Journal*, providing options which are viable with the overall convention activities. If you have any ideas on this topic, please contact me (philrph1892@cs.com or 847-727-1892)

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan

Upcoming BCCS Regional Meetings

- **Bay State Coin Show**, Marlboro, MA, Nov. 10. BCCS will have a Club Table on the bourse floor.

- **Baltimore Expo**, Baltimore, MD Convention Center, Friday, Nov. 16, 3:00 p.m.

- **Florida United Numismatists (FUN) Convention**, Orlando, FL, Jan. 10-13, 2013, TBA

Please see our website - www.barbercoins.org - for locations and exact meeting times, as these normally get confirmed closer to the show dates.

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of $50. Second place prize will be $25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS Nov. 25th

BCCS Regional Update

By **John Frost**, BCCS Regional Program Director

It's been a year since we launched our Regional Program at the 2011 ANA, and I am pleased to summarize our goals, our activities, and the results we had this past year. A group of people worked very hard and helped the Society in many different ways, and the results are impressive. I am pleased to report that the BCCS is well positioned for the future, and we are committed to continue moving forward, as I reported at our 2012 Annual Meeting at the ANA in Philadelphia.

Recap of the Program's Purpose

With the difficult economy, and a challenged hobby, many clubs like us have been experiencing declining membership over the past years, and the BCCS was no exception. But it was obvious that many Barber collectors had simply not even heard of the BCCS, and there was a wealth of opportunity here.

Our purpose was to launch a regional program that (1) spread the word about the Society, (2) brought the club to collectors that cannot routinely make it to the ANA or FUN where we had our meetings, (3) provide increased value to the membership through more meetings, more education, and more networking, and (4) increase membership. All of these things would feed on each other – more members mean more people to meet and participate, write *Journal* articles, and get involved whenever they could, driving more value and more members.

Recap of our Goals

Our goals for the year were to increase the number of meetings nationwide to at least 10 per year, and to use meetings and BCCS bourse tables to advertise the BCCS and increase membership.

Last year, the club endorsed acquisition of numerous high-quality banners to distribute around the country to support meetings and shows, and give the BCCS a professional-looking presence, a brand image, and make it easy for people to find us. Those of you who have been able to attend FUN, Baltimore, Long Beach, PNNA, Central States, the ANA, and other regional shows, have probably noticed it. It is in all of our photos.

Our Activities and the Results

We had a number of members step up and volunteer to host meetings and/or staff tables around the country, and some of the activities we accomplished were:

- West Regional Director **Glenn Holsonbake** hosted 3 meetings in Long Beach, and one at the PNNA. The West region has started small, but has made progress each time, and we are finally getting noticed out there.
- In the Midwest, **Richard Shimkus** and **Vern Sebby** staffed a table at Central States, met many collectors, and distributed a number of membership applications.
- **Southeast Director Walt Kennedy** had an extraordinary time in Charlotte signing up many new members, and found himself getting invited to other shows in the Carolinas and Georgia.
- **Joe Casazza** and **Matthew Student** helped staff the table at the NH Coin Expo, and **Carl Feldman** and **Richard Shimkus** also were a big help at FUN and Baltimore, where we had 3 meetings and a couple of tables this past year.
- At the ANA in Philadelphia, the BCCS teamed with the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC) for a table, and again **Richard** was a huge help, and **Carl, Gerry Fortin**, and newly re-joined **Craig Eberhart** all pitched in, along with others donating even a small part of their time.

We also partnered several times with the LSCC to hold joint meetings or have joint club tables, because many people who collect Barbers also collect Seated coinage. Joint table staffing is easier and both clubs netted new members from each other by working together.

To summarize our impressive results: In 2010, the BCCS held just 3 meetings. In 2012, we will end the year with 16 meetings in 11 different locations around the country. We have had club bourse tables at 10 different shows in 2012 as well. Many new collectors have been exposed to the BCCS for the first time.

Our BCCS regional meetings have also frequently included educational sessions as well, including "Overview of Barber Coinage," "Authenticating the 'Big 3' Barber Quarters," "The 1892-O Micro O Half," and "Buying Barbers as Bullion." Our attendance at Regional Meetings often rivals or even exceeds attendance at the ANA meeting. And materials to support anyone wanting to host a meeting or a club table at a local or regional show are now available to anyone on our website. This includes brochures/applications, tabletop signage, and power point presentations.

And finally, I am happy to report that as of the Philadelphia ANA, the

Regional Program has played a key role in the BCCS increasing its membership by a net 37 members, which is a very healthy increase, while other organizations continue to decline.

Upcoming meetings will be held in Marlboro, MA (new site for Bay State Coin Show, ex Boston) and Baltimore in November, wrapping up our very busy year. If any other meetings are added to the schedule, they will be posted on the website. And we look forward to kicking off 2013 with a great show at FUN in Orlando in January.

In addition to a great roster of upcoming shows and BCCS meetings, I will be meeting with the Regional Directors, planning how we move into 2013, and planning our goals and programs for the coming year.

Without everyone's help, this program would not be possible, and I would like to thank everyone who helped this year, especially the Regional Directors around the country. I look forward to our future.

If you want to help the BCCS, please help us at a Regional Show, especially if we have a table on the bourse floor. There is no better way to meet other Barber enthusiasts and it is great fun -- just ask any of us who have spent time behind a table! And you can help promote the club, and introduce people to Barber coinage. Please send e-mail to BCCS@barbercoins.org. If you want to host a meeting at a local show, you can also check out resources at: www.barbercoins.org/regional.html.

Hope to see you at one of our upcoming meetings!

BCCS "blind" Email List

The BCCS web service has the capability to send messages using a "Blind Carbon Copy" setting, which means everyone on the list gets the email, but nobody's email address is displayed. The advantages to having such a list include the ability to post last-minute BCCS get-togethers at regional shows and other types of Society communications, if needed, without having to wait for the next issue of the Journal. It is completely voluntary, and is open to members only. If you wish to be on this list, please send an email to: BCCS@BarberCoins.org and your name will be added. Your information will not be disclosed to anyone, and you will only receive email regarding BCCS business from the BCCS email account.

Barber Bits

Letter from the Editor:

Contributing editor and BCCS member Matthew Student never misses an opportunity to promote the Barber Coin Collectors Society. He did so recently at the online website www.coincommunity.com. You can read Matthew's entire message at http://www.coincommunity.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=127676.

In addition to allowing members to post messages, the site provides other tools that anyone can access. I clicked on "US Coin Facts" and was directed to a page that listed every U.S. coin denomination. I clicked on "1892-1916 Barber Dime" and was able to get mintages (circulation and proof) for each year and mint as well as Barber Dime general grading standards and the Barber Dime's specifications: diameter, weight, metal contents, edge design, and designer. What a great tool! Check it out at http://www.coincommunity.com/us_coin_facts/

Many thanks to Matthew for promoting BCCS and for bringing this helpful website to my attention.

2011 End of Year Question: In a sentence or two, tell us about your best experience in numismatics this past year.

Garry Hovis - My 10-year-old daughter started collecting coins.

Dr. Aaron Didich - Non-Barber related: I was formally informed that I discovered the first new Bust Dime variety in 29 years by the John Reich Collector Society (JRCS). Designated 1827 JR-14, after their 2011 census of members, it is still a great honor. Barber related: Finally made a new upgrade for my half collection, 1914 XF-48. First in five years. Sadly, missed getting my only needed quarter, a 1901-S VF-25, by $100.00 at auction.

Carl Feldman - At this year's ANA Convention in Chicago, I was able to trade an early type coin for an 1896-O Barber 50c in PCGS 55 ((CAC) plus some cash for a coin I had been looking for in AU for a very long time. A happy Barber collector.

Peter Mosiondz, Jr. - Receiving a very nice thank you card from the Ocean County Coin Club thanking me for some items I sent for their YNs. Also, from the same club, an elongated cent and thank you letter for my military service.

Fred Flug - Completed my set of Barber Halves including the micro"O." Time required: over 15 years.

Ralph Vignola - I bought several Barber Quarters from a coin dealer at a flea market. The coins were in his "scrap box." One was an 1896-S in AG. I paid scrap price for all the coins.

Don Duttton - Last December I obtained an 1854 one dollar coin PCGS minted at Dahlonega, GA.

George Sobczynski - Over the summer I was helping my brother clean out an old house he had recently purchased. In the attic, we found a suitcase with some coins inside. There were some common date large cents that were well-worn, some foreign coins and a couple of Barber dimes, one of which was an 1895-O in nice VF. This was one of my best finds ever and it now resides in my Barber dime collection.

Thomas Shvachta - I found an 1898-O 10c for $150.00 and it came back PCGS AU-50!

Henry Salvione - I completed a grading set of PCGS half dollars from AG-3 to AU-58. Now collecting a complete set of these Barber halves from F-15 and better.

Paul Kluth - Very fortunate to be able to acquire the Sam Thurman Collection of Liberty Head Nickel cuds. His coins are listed with photos in the book Sam co-authored that has long been out of print.

Robie Tompkins - Meeting John Frost and Matt Student at the NH Coin Expo with the complete set of Barber quarters and having them point out the rarities in the set. This prompted me to join the club. They were most helpful and knowledgeable.

Robert Simpson - I have Barber dime and half dollar grading books autographed by David Lawrence in 1st edition.

Robert Lubberman - Meeting other Barber collectors at the Philadelphia show. I really believe there is much more interest in the Barber series based on the last two shows where I had a sales table.

Mike Schulfer - I completed my "set" of large size Federal Reserve Bank Notes from Chicago by getting the $2.00 Battleship note. My set consisted of the $1.00, $2.00 and $5.00 notes only because the $10.00 and $20.00 are very expensive and seldom available. I remember singing to the radio on the way home with the window open and the note on the passenger seat next to me with the battleship staring up at me for the 45 minute ride home.

Barber Quarter Varieties Survey Results Delayed

It was our original intention to announce the results of the Varieties Survey at our Annual Meeting at the ANA and and to publish them in this issue of the *Journal*. Unfortunately, due to some excessive travel for my real job, I haven't had the time to tally the results, so we extended the deadline to September 1 for submittal. The good news is that this extension has yielded several additional submissions, so we are better off for it.

The results of the survey will be published in the next issue of the *Journal*, and on the website. Thanks for everyone's understanding.

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(Nearly) Completing a Set of Barber Quarters

By **David W. Lange**, BCCS #4

About the time that my article on completing a set of Barber Halves ran in the BCCS *Journal*, I put the finishing touches on my collection of Barber Quarters. Of course, there's an asterisk next to this story, as I don't own a 1901-S quarter, and I don't anticipate adding it anytime soon. One grading only Fair or About Good might be feasible, but I don't relish the idea of owning a coin worn so slick that it fits loosely within my album and rotates every which way. A 1901-S quarter with enough meat left on it to still have edge reeding and sit firmly in the opening would cost $10k or more, and I just can't reset my mind to spending such an amount. So what follows is my experience in assembling a nice circulated set of Barber Quarters complete for all other issues.

I spent a little over ten years putting the set together, though it was not my exclusive collecting pursuit at any point during that time. Like my half dollar set, this one began with an impulse purchase not intended to be the beginning of anything greater. During my years living in New Jersey (1994-2001) I was a regular attendee at the small but surprisingly vigorous coin show held monthly at the PAL Hall in Parsippany (it's still thriving from what I read in the coin message boards, though I haven't been to it in many years). Among my frequent stops there was a booth at the end of one aisle run by a very nice elderly couple who always had nice USA and world coins conservatively graded and affordably priced. On December 3, 2000 I bought from them a delightful 1915(P) quarter grading just shy of full XF and having completely natural, problem-free surfaces. I paid only $17, and this bargain price is likely what prompted the purchase of something I was not then collecting. I didn't know it at the time, but I was already hooked.

Just a month later, during the 2001 FUN Show, I bought an 1899-S quarter in VG-F from a very well-known, national dealer for $26. Barber coins were on my mind, as I had just begun putting together the set of halves described in Volume 22-2 of the BCCS *Journal*. I was intrigued by this elusive issue, which had always been a tough one to find during my previous experiences in Barber collecting. It was a nice complement to my attractive, albeit common, 1915. These two impulse purchases led to my seeking the rest of the set, a situation to which most collectors can relate. This was just the latest episode in a long love affair with the series.

My earliest experience with Barber Quarters had come from examining the inventory at F. W. Woolworth's coin and stamp department (in the 1960s and '70s many department and variety stores offered such collectibles for sale, but the big gold and silver run-up of 1979-80 pretty much extinguished them). These departments typically were concessions managed by someone who rented the space and were not operated by the stores' own management. The material offered was supplied by huge wholesale dealerships, the most notable being the Friedberg Brothers' Coin and Currency Institute, best remembered today as the publisher of the old Library of Coins albums and several standard reference books.

The Woolworth store in downtown San Francisco featured swiveling metal and glass panels mounted upright so that customers could turn them like pages in a book. The coins were in stapled, 2x2 holders set between the panels of glass and marked with non-negotiable prices. Common-date Barber Quarters grading anywhere from About Good to Very Good were priced at $1.50, dimes at 75 cents apiece and the halves at a grand $3 each. I later learned that these figures were about 50-70% higher than current retail values, but it was way too much money for a 10-year-old in any case. A few years later the swinging panels were replaced with an actual square booth manned by a nice fellow named George, and I did buy a number of coins from him, but none of them Barbers.

My first actual purchase of a Barber Quarter was from the bid board of a local coin shop. I'm told there are still bid boards at some coin stores even today, though I haven't seen one in ages. For the benefit of anyone who doesn't know how these work, I'll explain. Coins are suspended on a wall, usually within clear plastic bags or 2x2 holders, and there's a bid sheet attached. Customers write their names and bids on the sheet, and the highest bid at the time of the sale's closing, usually on a Saturday, is the winner and buys the coin. Given our current day concerns about security and privacy, this is a quaint custom indeed, but it was a fun way to buy coins and became a popular gathering spot for collectors to socialize. Through this means, I purchased an 1893-O quarter that was just barely distinguishable by date and mint, but it was my first Barber Quarter and nearly 80 years old at the time, so I was elated. I quickly followed this up by responding to an ad in one of the monthly coin magazines offering 15 different Barber Quarters at some reasonable figure. This was my first experience with the term "average circulated," which I soon came to realize meant way below average.

I acquired a small assortment of Barber Dimes, too, all of them nearly slick, but my attention was drawn mostly to the halves. This series had no real stoppers that prevented completion, and I quickly forgot about the dimes and quar-

ters for some years. It was not until the 1980s that I began to assemble Choice About Uncirculated collections of all three Barber silver series. These were later sold when in various stages of completion, and it was not until my 2000 impulse purchase of the 1915(P) quarter described above that I returned to collecting Barber Quarters in their entirety.

In addition to the 1899-S quarter, pieces bought for the set in 2001 included an 1892(P) in VF at $18, an 1899(P) in the same grade at $15, a VF-XF 1902-S priced at $45, a 1906-D grading just-made-it VF at $15 and a 1914(P) in F-VF at a mere $13. Except for the 1902-S, these are all common coins and were easy to find, even with natural surfaces and no problems. My collection progressed slowly over the next several years, as I was very careful about the quality of coins acquired. In addition, Barber Quarters had to share my time and money with other areas of collecting, with some years being skewed toward one area or another. For example, I added five Barber Quarters in 2002, six in 2003 and only three in 2004. Over the next several years I was more enthusiastic about this set, buying eight coins in 2005, nine in 2006 and another eight in 2007. With the economic uncertainty many experienced following the Wall Street debacle and banking crisis, I added only three coins in 2008 and none at all the following year. 2010 and 2011 witnessed a sprint to the finish, with a dozen pieces acquired each year, bringing my collection to its present state of completion, lacking only the 1901-S rarity.

To be accurate I must clarify that the above annual rosters include only those coins which remain in my collection today. Perhaps another couple dozen or so Barber Quarters were purchased over the years, only to be upgraded by those in the current line-up. Particularly toward the end of my collecting, I become conscious of which pieces needed upgrading or simply didn't look right alongside the others.

Before 2010, all of my Barber Quarter purchases for the present collection had been made at coin shops or shows in face-to-face transactions. For me this has always been the most enjoyable method of acquiring coins, but it seems to have become evermore difficult with the passing of years. There are far fewer coin shops than in my youth, and it's also now harder to find attractive coins in dealers' cases at shows. So much retail activity has moved toward internet sales that I had to resort to this venue to fill or upgrade the remaining holes in my album. Several of my final Barber Quarter purchases were made through eBay, using my own judgment in buying both certified and raw coins.

I found that I sometimes had to buy a higher grade than anticipated for the

scarce issues, because I simply couldn't find quality pieces in the grade I was seeking. It was risky to pass up any needed coin that was choice for the grade, whatever that may have been. A good example of this is my 1892-S quarter, which grades nearly XF and cost me $210 in 2010. I would have preferred a problem-free F-VF piece with nice, original surfaces, but such a coin is very rare. Like several of the tougher issues in my set, this one was purchased already slabbed by a major grading service and then cracked out by me to place into my album. This may not make the best business sense, but I was building the collection for my own satisfaction, and I'm a sucker for vintage Whitman Bookshelf albums from the 1960s. I have many slabbed coins, too, but these are stand-alone items that I use when teaching my students at the American Numismatic Association's Summer Seminar.

Nearly all of the scarcer issues in this series were upgraded during the last year or two of collecting. These coins include 1892-O, 1893-O, 1893-S, 1895-O, 1895-S, 1897-S, 1898-S and 1914-S. One real surprise was how long it took me to find a 1900(P) quarter that was of the right grade and pleasing to my eye. I owned no less than four of these before finding a nice VF-XF example that cost me $36 on December 9, 2011. This eBay purchase marked the official completion of my collection as it now stands.

Of the Big Three key dates in this series, I made fortunate purchases for the two I own. My 1896-S quarter grades a just-made-it VG, and I bought it in 2002 for $750 before the price run-up for key dates that occurred over the next several years. I remember picking it up at some show in the Midwest; it may have been the Central States Convention. As for the 1913-S, I put off buying this for too long, and its price rose dramatically in the years leading up to my 2010 purchase. Once again, however, luck was on my side, and I benefitted from the seller's bad luck. He had had this coin slabbed by a major grading service, which very conservatively labeled it G-4. In his eBay auction listing, he observed that it should have been graded VG and placed a minimum bid about $200 over the value of a G-4 coin. I was nearly in agreement with his assessment, grading it at the high end of G-6, and I won the lot as the sole bidder. The color of this coin is not quite a perfect match for the rest of my set, but the piece has original surfaces that would appeal to any collector of this series.

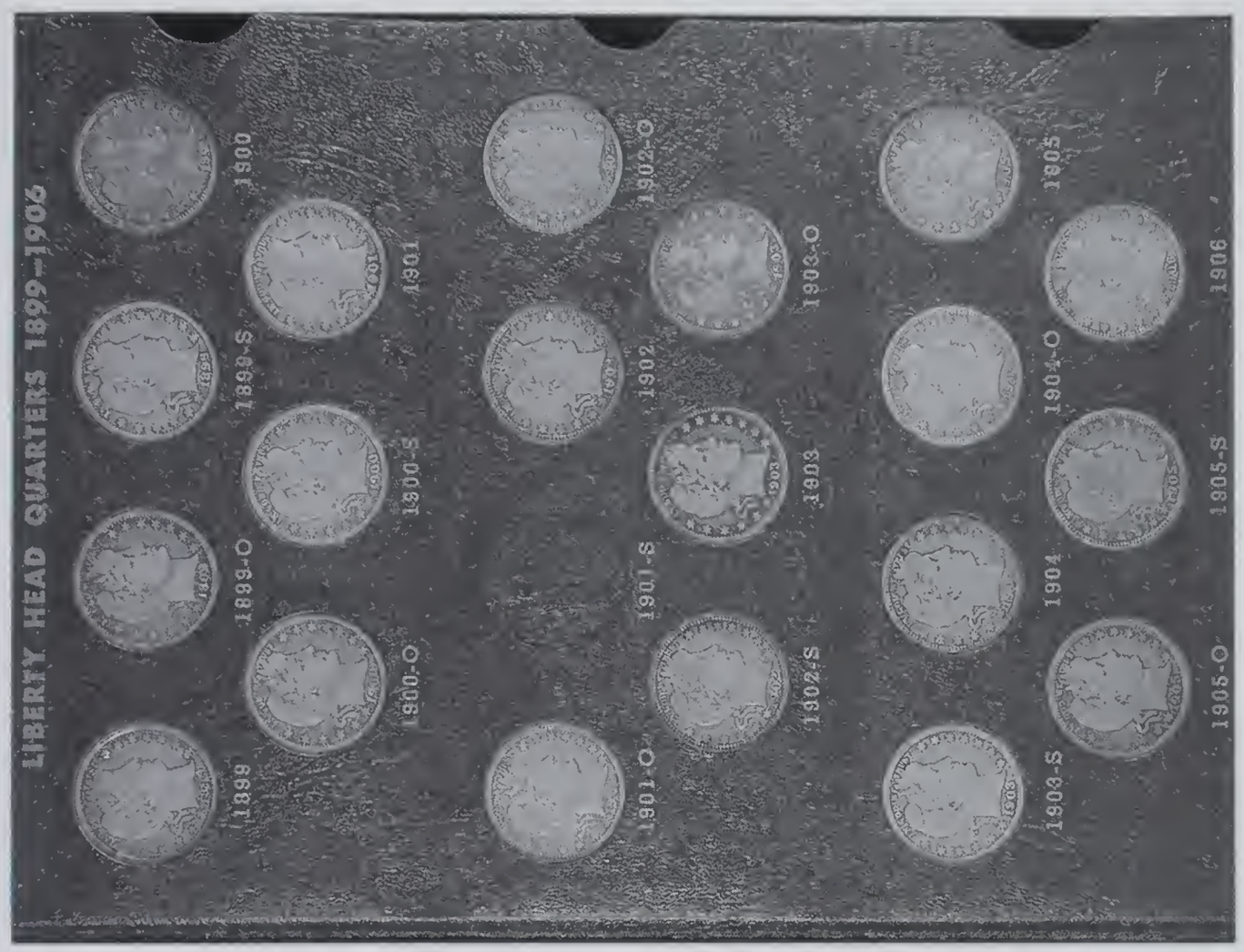
Excluding the 1901-S issue, a complete set of Barber Quarters by date and mint comprises 73 coins. I paid a total of $7171 for my current line-up, which is lacking only that key date. This makes for an average cost of $98.23 per coin, a figure that certainly is comfortable for most collectors. The collection is a handsome one in my estimation, and the care taken in selecting only coins that have original

surfaces and are free of damage and other distractions was certainly worthwhile.

My set looks great in the old album, and the coins are sufficiently toned to protect them from any harm that the album itself might pose. I took the extra precaution of replacing the stock acetate slides with ones cut from mylar currency holders. This also makes for greater clarity and truer color for the viewer. One problem I did have with the album is that the openings were too large in some instances. As a collector of old coin albums, I know that this problem was nearly unique to the Barber Quarter Bookshelf album in its first printing, the more common complaint for coin albums being undersize openings. I got around this issue by fitting the lower half of a Kointain shell around the several affected coins, and this made for firm fit, though it did reduce the clarity of the coins' reverses a bit.

To overcome the visual distraction of the vacant 1901-S port, I resorted to a trick I've been using since my teenage years to deal with key-date coins. I simply cut two squares out of the backing paper from a common Whitman folder, as these folders are of the same color and material as the Bookshelf albums. The squares were then slid underneath the face and back papers of the album page to rest on the surface of the clear slides, creating a nearly indiscernible covering for the port on either side. An alternative solution is to place two coins into the opening, one a common 1901(P) quarter mounted heads up, and the other a common 'S' Mint quarter of some other date resting back to back with it so that the viewer sees what appears to be a 1901-S quarter! I've since abandoned this practice of my youth, as I don't want some future buyer of my set to be deceived, should I no longer be alive to reveal the truth.

I'll make a few parting observations about the Barber Quarter series, one of which is that the same hoarding practiced with the scarcer Barber Halves affects these coins, as well. There always seem to be people who will buy up every key-date coin they can find, while disregarding the rest of the series. This makes for an artificial scarcity that drives up prices and ultimately frustrates many collectors. Another conclusion which I've drawn from my collecting of Barber Quarters is that this series is harder to complete with exclusively problem-free coins than is the half dollar set. Even omitting the Big Three, the coins seem to have suffered more use and abuse. This is especially true of the years 1892-1905. Finally, Barber Quarters offer greater variety for the collector, with the transitional hubs of 1892 and 1900, as well as the wandering mintmark positions of the 1892-97 coins. While I didn't attempt to collect this series by varieties, that possibility exists for the hobbyist who simply can't stop buying Barber Quarters.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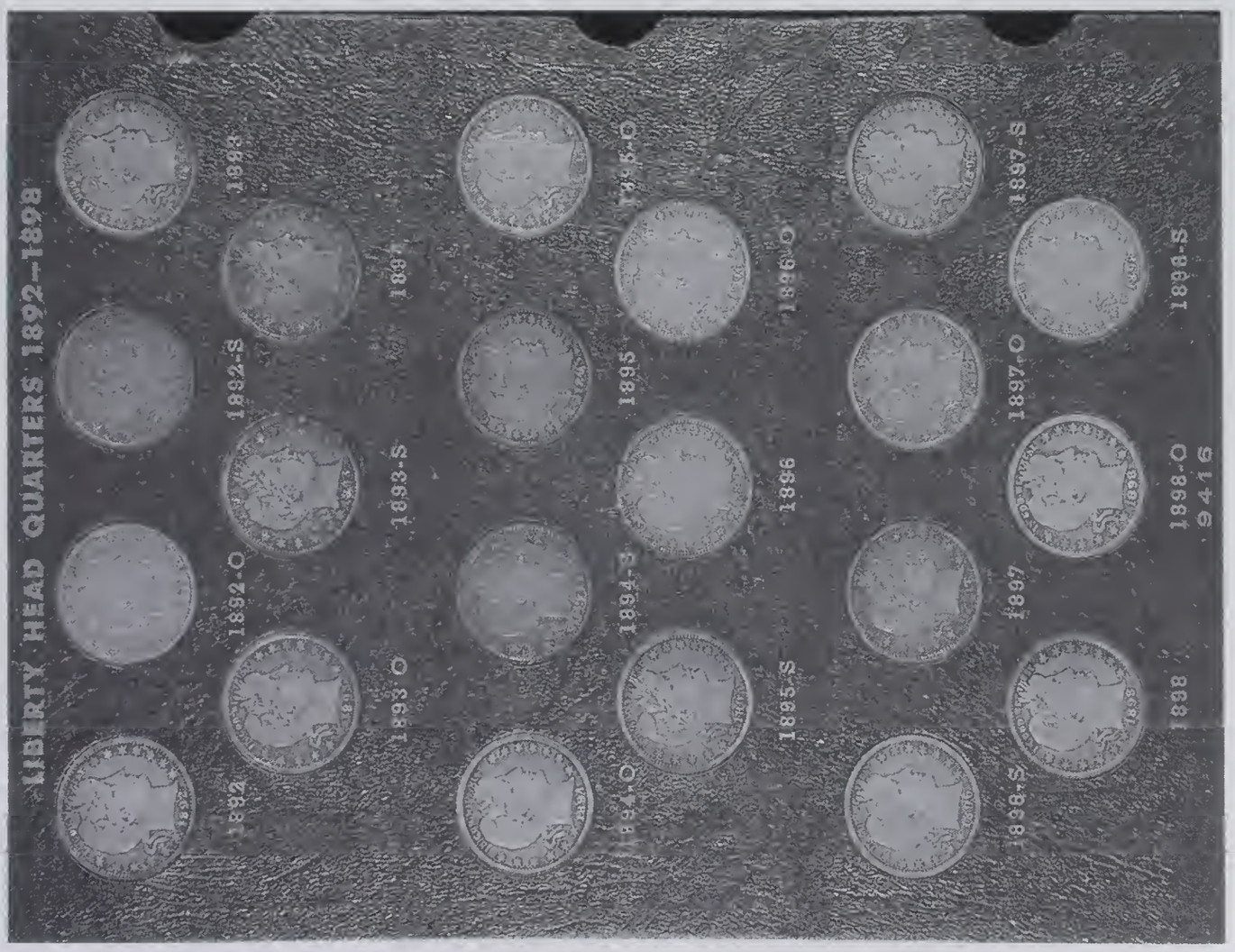
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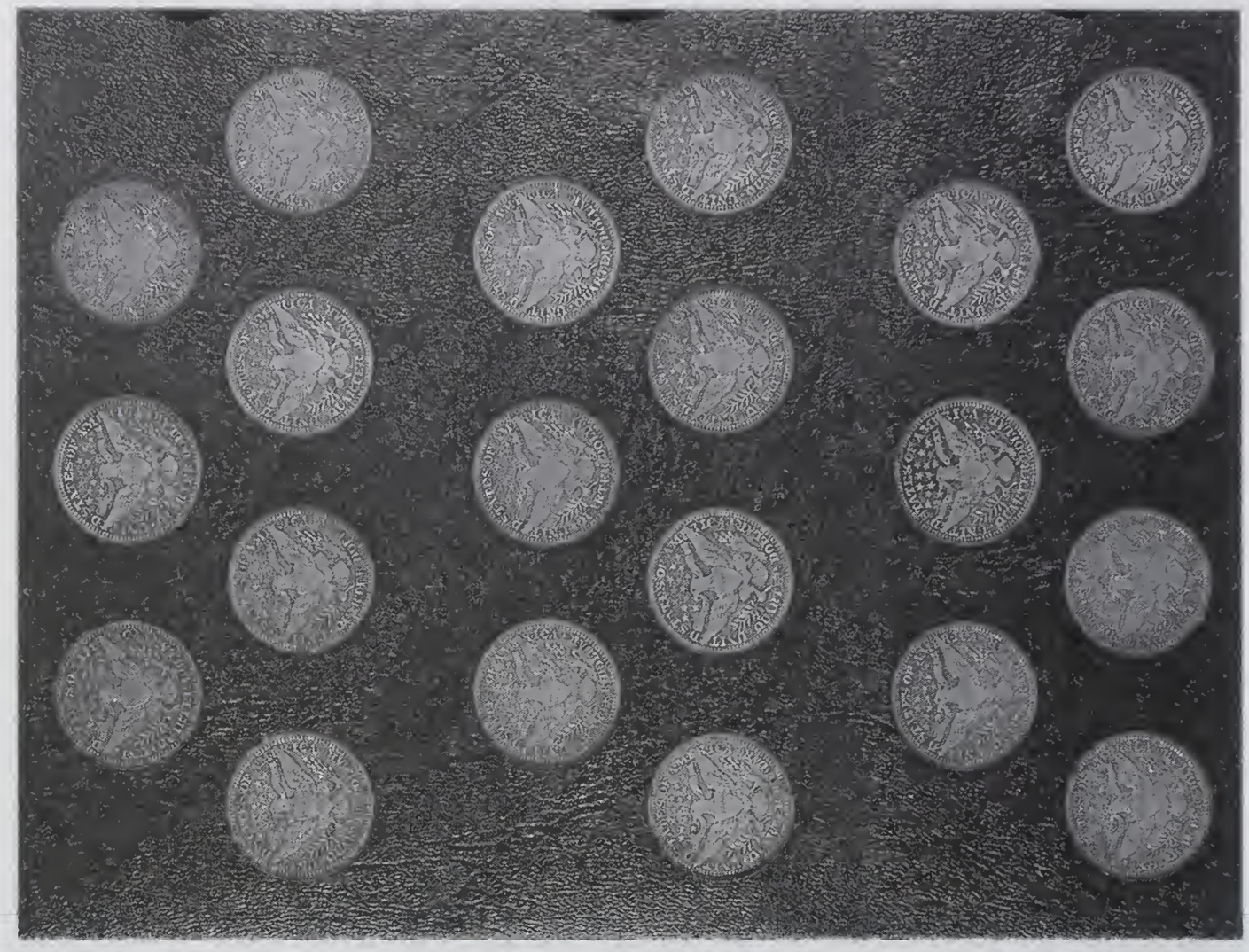

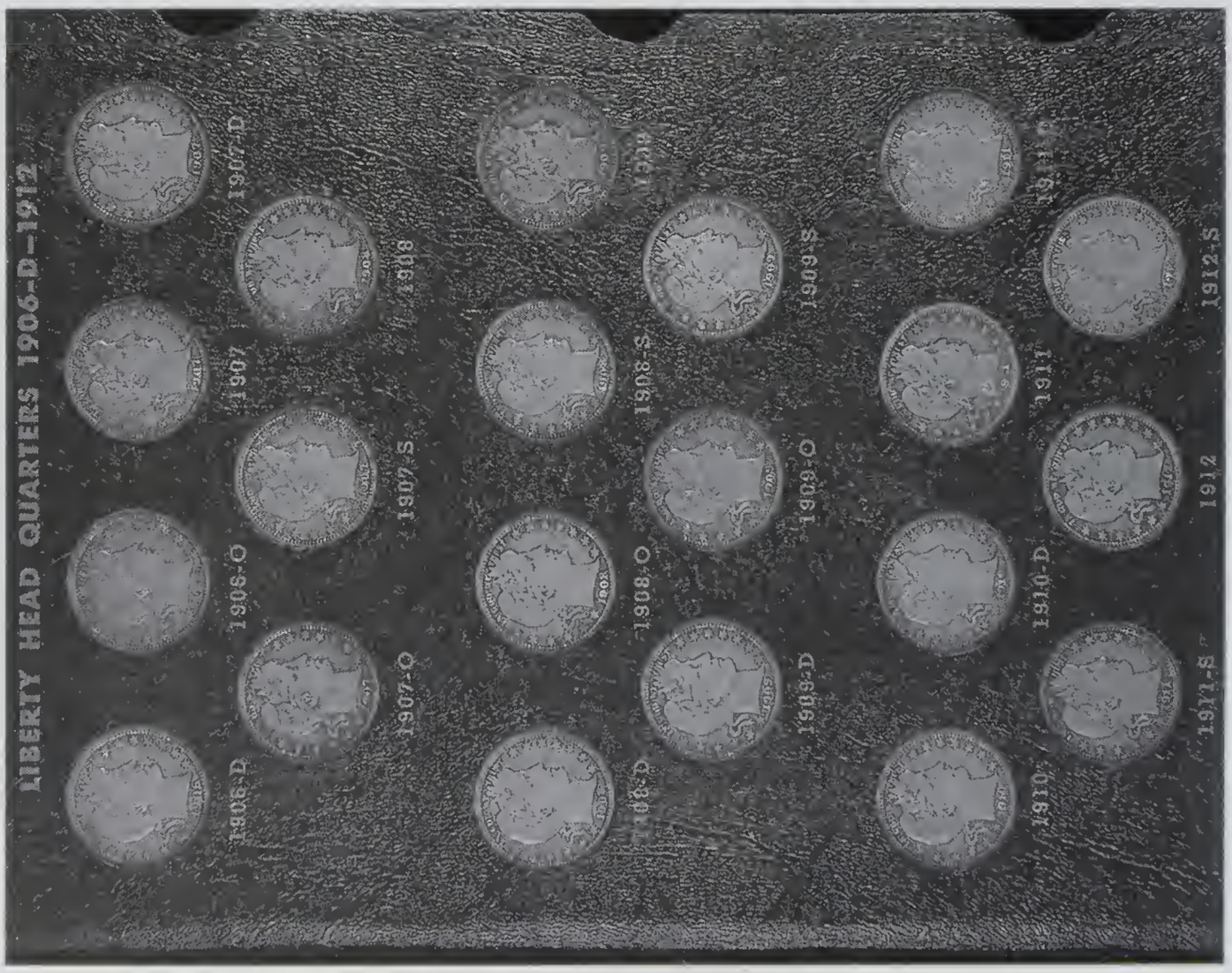
LIBERTY HEAD QUARTERS 1906-D-1912
1906-D
1906-O
1907
1907-D
1907-O
1907-S
1908
1908-D
1908-O
1908-S
1909
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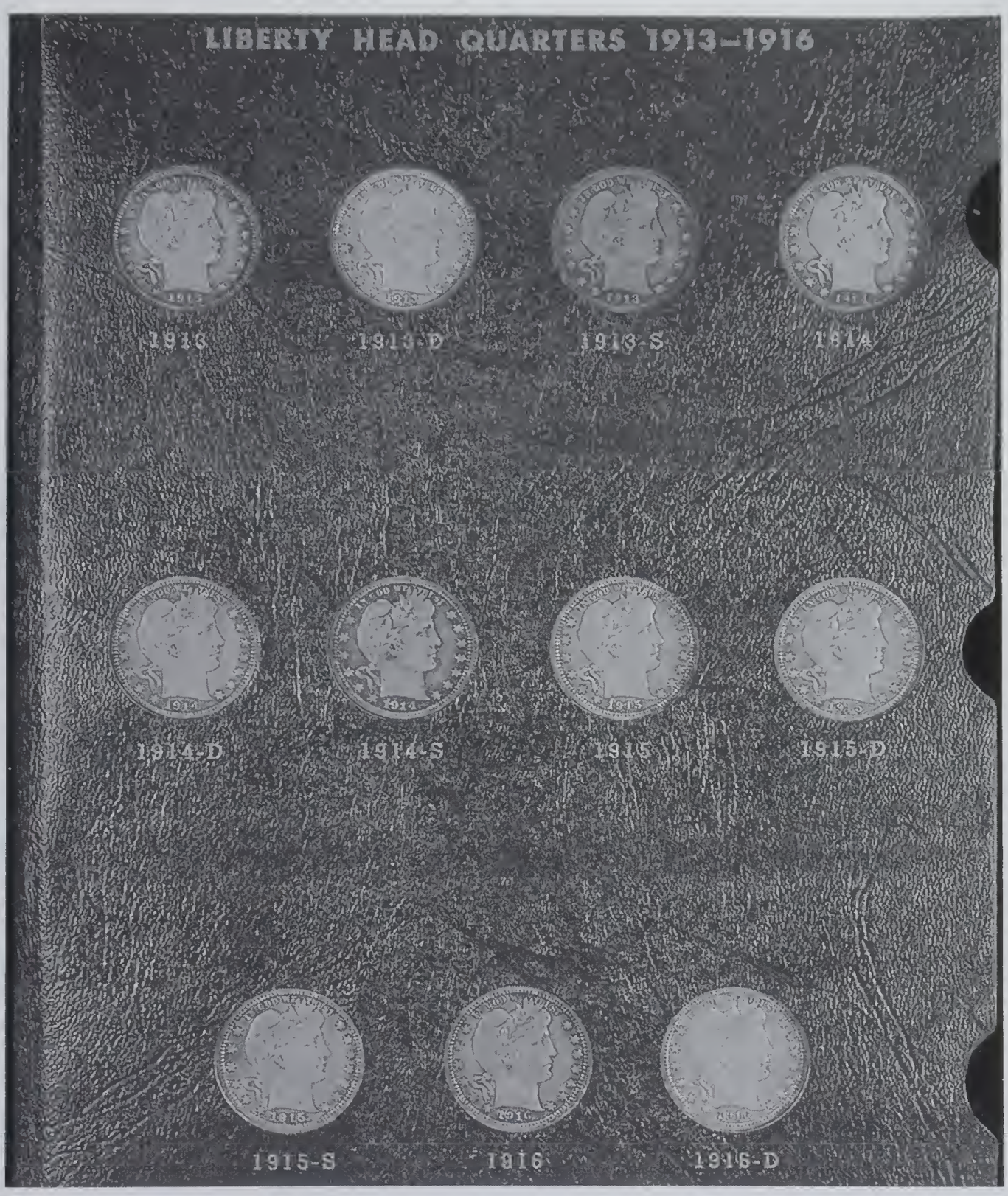
1912
1912-S



Dave Lawrence Barber Books now On-line at DLRC Website

All three David Lawrence Barber coin books - *The Complete Guide to Barber Dimes, The Complete Guide to Barber Quarters*, and *The Complete Guide to Barber Halves*, as well as *The Complete Guide to Certified Barber Coinage* by David Lawrence & John Feigenbaum - are available at the DLRC on-line library website: http://www.stellacoinnews.com/. Simply click on "Reference Books" and scroll down to the book title you want. Access is free, no membership required.

Back to the Penn Coin Shop

By **Peter Mosiondz, Jr.**

Previously I told you about the Penn Coin Shop in downtown Philadelphia and the wonderful people who operated it.

In the heady days of the 1950s and early 1960s, there were literally dozens of coin and stamp shops to choose from, some even next door to each other. Many dealt in both hobbies and I truly enjoy both pastimes to this day. But one store in particular stood out in my young mind. It wasn't because they treated me so nice; most of the stores did really welcome and embrace youngsters. In those years of low rents and relatively low cost of living, one didn't need to worry about selling high priced items to wealthy clients just to make ends meet. Things ran at a much slower pace back then.

In that previous story I related how I found an 1895-O dime in the Penn Coin Shop's Barber Dime junk box. What I am about to recount is an incident that occurred a couple of months before that fabulous find.

My friend Larry's parents owned and operated a typical city corner variety store and Larry spent a great deal of time searching the register for "keepers" as we called any coin grading Good or better with a value of $1.00 or more in *A Guide Book of United States Coins*. The non-keepers, which included Buffalo nickels, Mercury dimes, Standing Liberty quarters and Liberty Walking halves, were left for circulation. In those days it seemed as if we knew the mintage figures of all the worthwhile coins, or "keepers," without so much as opening *The Red Book*.

That Saturday morning I was waiting for Larry to come down (the family lived on the two floors above the store), and ordered a fountain soda. I received a 1923-D dime in change from his dad. I obviously had beaten Larry to the till that day, for he would have known – as I did – that the coin was a counterfeit. It was a well-traveled Very Good, and I wondered what stories it could tell me about its journeys, beginning with its clandestine birth. I remember Larry telling me later, "If I didn't sleep so late today, I would have found it." Up the street we went to wait for the bus to take us on our magical journey to the Penn Coin Shop.

"Mom," as she wanted us to call her, was behind the counter and greeted Larry and me with a warm smile and a cheery "Good morning, my young friends."

Mom knew, of course, that I had been checking her "junk" boxes every week. I had found all of the Philadelphia Mint Liberty Nickels from 1900 to 1912 the week before, as well as a couple of earlier dates. I was ready to move on to another box when Mom said, "Here's the Liberty Nickel box." I gingerly reminded her that I had looked at it last Saturday but she said, with the inevitable twinkle in her eyes, "We keep adding new things all the time."

Never would I refuse her requests. I accepted the box and began going through it. She asked, "Did you pick out a 1912 last week?" I replied in the affirmative and she said, "Oh well. There's a nice one in there." I continued looking and found the 1912. It graded at least a solid Good without any detracting features. I thought maybe I'd get lucky and it would have a "D" mintmark on the reverse. I turned the coin over and I *was* lucky - extremely lucky. There it was, a clear "S" where I had hoped to find the "D."

I told Mom, "I sure need this coin, but not at 10 cents." She asked why not and I told her. She said, "If it was in that box, the price is 10 cents." She seemed to shrug it off as a coin that may have come out of one of many rolls of Liberty nickels just obtained and dumped into the box, but I knew better. There certainly didn't seem to be many, if any, new pieces in that box since I last examined it a week earlier.

Larry and I each picked out some Kraft 2x2 envelopes and a couple of folders, and paid for them along with our coin selections. I don't believe I spent $3.00 for everything I took home. We said our good-byes and said, "We'll see you next Saturday."

Are there any coin stores still open on Saturdays that cater to the kids? Alas, how times have changed.

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Barber Coin Collectors' Society

1. Promotes the writing and sharing of information on Barber coins to an organization of individuals who are interested in increasing their knowledge of the series; for Society purposes, Barber coins are defined as primarily U.S. dimes, quarters and half dollars designed by Charles E. Barber, and minted from 1892 to 1916.

2. Gives Barber hobbyists an opportunity to contact other collectors with similar numismatic interests.

3. Can promote consistent grading standards among collectors, dealers, society members and non-members alike.

4. Through group purchasing power, can offer its members discounts on numismatic materials relating especially to the collecting of Barber coins.

5. Provides members a means to trade their Barbers with other members, in an effort to upgrade or complete their collection.

6. Effectively lobbies numismatic shows and events to provide Barber exhibits and space for all Barber dealers to sell their merchandise.

7. Promotes the collecting of Barbers and the hobby in general to today's youngsters.

8. Offers benefit to all Barber collectors, whether they collect Barber dimes, quarters or halves, graded AG or MS65+.

9. Makes sure its members have a say in the organization.

10. Is a not-for-profit organization dedicated solely to the benefit of its members and those who assist the Society in advancing its purpose.

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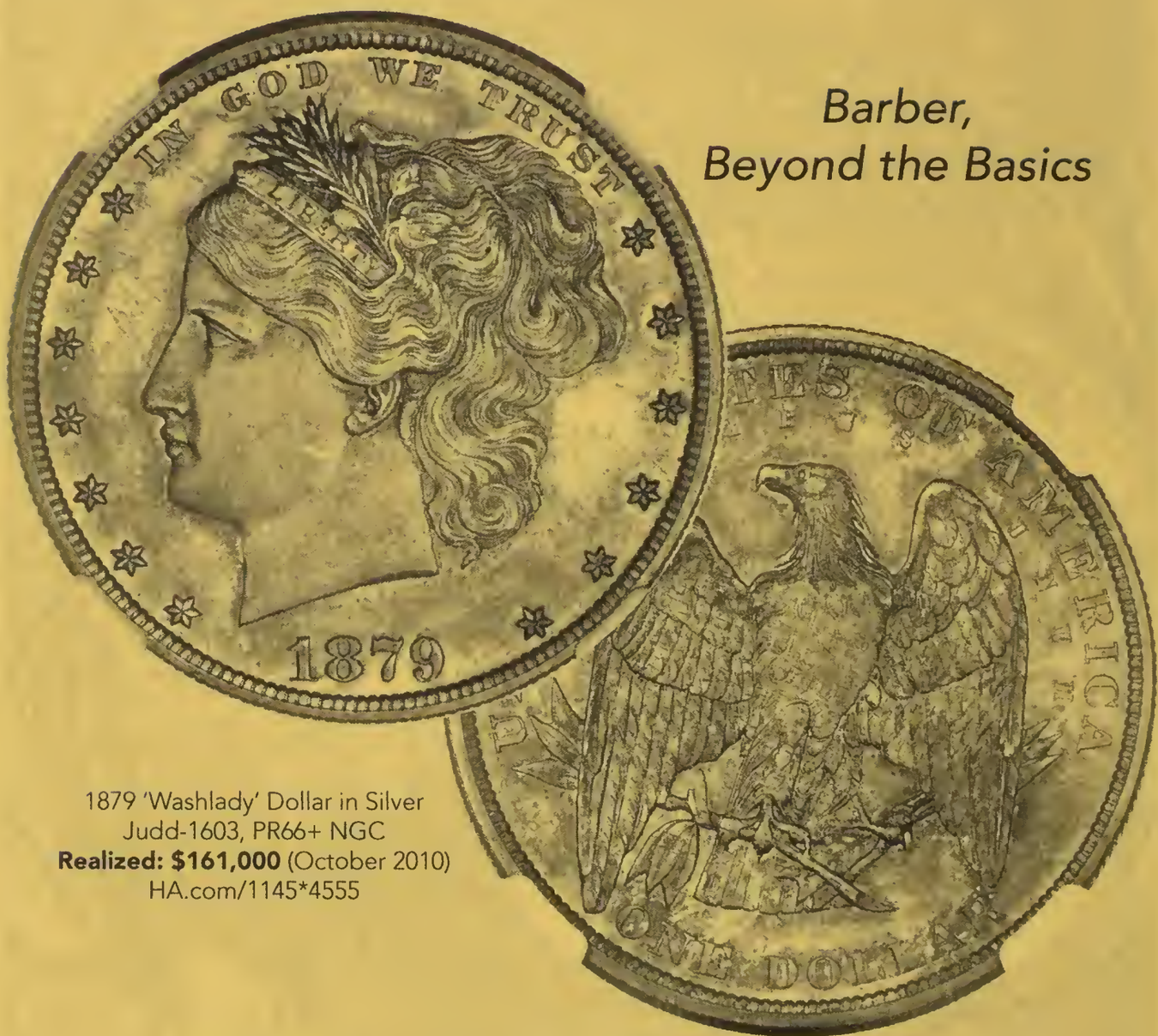

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